Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of a microencapsulated composition containing at least one lipophilic compound comprising:

(i) particle size reduction of the lipophilic compound, in the presence of a surface active agent, to provide a first composition;

(ii) providing a solution of alkali metal alginate;

(iii) combining said first composition and the alkali metal alginate solution to provide a second composition;

(iv) adding dropwise the second composition to a solution containing Ca^{2+}, thereby obtaining beadlets, and removing the formed beadlets from said solution;

(v) rinsing the beadlets with an acidic solution and drying said beadlets to obtain dried beadlets; and

(vi) coating the dried beadlets with a coating material to obtain microcapsules containing said lipophilic compound.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is reduced to a particle size not greater than 20 µm.

3. (Original) A process according to claim 2 wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is reduced to a particle size not greater than 10 µm.

4. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal alginate is sodium or potassium alginate.

5. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein a filler is added to stage (i).

6. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the lipophilic compound is selected from the group consisting of lycopene, beta and alpha-carotene, lutein, astaxanthin, zeaxanthin, vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin D, omega 3 oils, omega 6 oils and mixtures thereof.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein a filler is added to stage (ii).

8. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the lipophilic compound containing alginate beadlets are in the size range of 100 to 425 µm.

9. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the acidic solution is an acidic aqueous solution of an acid selected from the group consisting of citric, aspartic, acetic, ascorbic, lactic, phosphoric and hydrochloric acids.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the coating material applied in stage (vi) is selected from the group consisting of cellulose derivatives, waxes, fats, proteins and polysaccharides.

11. (Original) A process according to claim 10 wherein the cellulose derivative is hydroxypropylcellulose.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein size reduction of stage (i) is carried out in a liquid medium wherein said liquid medium is water or a water miscible liquid.

13. (Original) A microencapsulated composition comprising of one or more lipophilic compounds enveloped by a surfactant agent, encapsulated in an alginate matrix and further coated with an outer coating, wherein the particle size of the lipophilic substance is not greater than 20 μm.

14. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the lipophilic compound is selected from

the group consisting of lycopene, beta and alpha-carotene, lutein, astaxanthin, zeaxanthin, vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin D, omega 3 oils, omega 6 oils and mixtures thereof.

15. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is not greater than 10 µm.

16. (Original) A composition according to claim 15 wherein the particle size not greater than 5 µm.

17. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the size of the microcapsules is in the range of 50 µm to 950 µm.

18. (Original) A composition according to claim 17 wherein the size of the microcapsules is in the range of 100 µm to 450 µm.

19. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 comprising 0.1% to 40% of a lipophilic compound or mixtures thereof.

20. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the outer coating is a material selected from the group consisting of cellulose derivatives, waxes, fats, proteins and polysaccharides.

21. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 19 wherein the outer coating is hydroxypropyl-cellulose.

22. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 wherein said composition is tablet grade.

23. (Original) A method for incorporating lipophilic compounds in food stuff comprising of encapsulating the lipophilic compound according to the process of claim 1 and adding the encapsulated composition to food stuff.

24. (Original) A method for masking the flavor and/or smell of lipophilic compounds comprising encapsulating the lipophilic compound according to the process of claim 1.

25. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a microencapsulated composition containing at least one liquid lipophilic compound, comprising:

(i) particle size reduction of the liquid lipophilic compound, in the presence of a surface active agent, and ~~optimally~~ optionally a filler in a liquid medium of (1) water, (2) a water-miscible liquid, or (3) a mixture of water and a water-miscible liquid, thereby providing a suspension or emulsion wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is not greater than 10 μm;

(ii) providing a solution of an alkali metal alginate optionally containing a filler;

(iii) combining said suspension or emulsion and the solution of alkali metal alginate to provide a second suspension or emulsion;

(iv) adding dropwise the second suspension or emulsion to a solution containing Ca^{2+} thereby obtaining beadlets in liquid, said beadlets having a second coating thereon, and removing said beadlets from said liquid;

(v) rinsing said beadlets with an acidic solution and drying said beadlets to obtain dried beadlets;

(vi) coating the dried beadlets with a coating material to provide a third coating, thereby obtaining microcapsules of 100-450 μm in particle size containing said lipophilic compound, wherein said microcapsules comprise said second and third coatings.